

Welcome to *OVAE Connection*

OVAE Connection is a new newsletter from the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) of the U.S. Department of Education. This is our first issue. We are sending it to all of those who received the former *Thursday Notes*, *Up-to-Date with DATE*, and *Community College Compendium*. We will do our best to provide “news you can use.” We recognize that not all news will be usable for each reader, but we will try to ensure that each news item has some potential utility for at least a segment of our audience. Articles will come from OVAE staff involved in career and technical education; adult education; community colleges; and research, evaluation, technical assistance, and dissemination. We also want to feature articles that let those in the field know what others in the field are doing that has proven to be of value. Please send us information that others should know about what is working. And we want your feedback about what is useful and what is not. Please give us your [constructive suggestions](#). Thank you!

OVAE Joins DOL in Gathering Input for Technical Assistance on Workforce Capacity

OVAE Assistant Secretary Brenda Dann-Messier has joined Jane Oates, assistant secretary for employment and training at the U.S. Department of Labor, to host four discussion forums that will help develop a technical assistance strategy to improve the [capacity of the workforce system to serve adults](#). The target population includes dislocated workers who need industry-recognized and postsecondary credentials to re-enter the workforce in good jobs that pay a livable wage. The first forum, Career Pathways for Low-skilled Adults, was held April 19 in Seattle. Invited participants included workforce and adult education experts, practitioners, and representatives of organizations that have provided technical assistance or research on career pathways models. The session was conducted at the annual meeting of the American Association of Community Colleges. Three additional sessions will be held in locations across the country: Transitioning Adults—Low-skilled to Middle-skilled; Credentialing; and A Snapshot of the System.

Cuyahoga Community College Leads Health Information Technology Training Program

Ohio’s [Cuyahoga Community College](#) (Tri-C) has been selected to lead a group of Midwestern community colleges that will offer health information technology (HIT) training to move the nation toward a system of electronic medical records. Tri-C will lead the Midwestern Consortium involving 17 community colleges that will receive a year-one award of \$7.5 million with potential for additional funds of more than \$7 million in year two from the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*.

The initiative is part of a nationwide effort to meet requirements of the [HITECH Act](#), which mandates that every U.S. citizen have an electronic medical record by 2014. Tri-C and the other community colleges will use the grant funds to provide training to current and future healthcare workers who will integrate electronic health record information systems at hospitals, doctors’ offices and other medical facilities throughout the nation.

Career and College Readiness Proposed For ESEA and Race to the Top

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The administration’s proposed revisions to the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* include a new emphasis on career readiness to match *ESEA*’s traditional emphasis on academic readiness. This integration of purposes is designed to eliminate dead ends for career and technical education students because they will be qualified for higher education and to provide all students with broad career orientations. Combining career and college readiness will open postsecondary options for all students and minimize students’ needs for remedial courses in postsecondary institutions. The [assessment component](#) of the Race to the Top initiative provides for development of tools to examine students’ academic skills and adds assessment of both “21st-century skills”, such as problem solving, and technical skills that are related to career readiness. These tools will enable guidance—about student progress made and next steps needed—to become one critical element in each student’s progress along a pathway that combines academic and career progress.